



THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST SENATE COALITION

GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE

March 14, 2008

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science
& Related Agencies
S-146A The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science
& Related Agencies
144 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Madam Chairman and Ranking Member:

As members of the Great Lakes delegation, we are writing to express our strong support for the multiple programs run by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that benefit the Great Lakes. Specifically, we would like to request the following.

- **We request that the Committee provide \$90 million for the National Coastal Zone Management Program grants.**

This program, administered by the Coastal Programs Division at NOAA, provides funding to states with approved coastal zone management plans for projects that preserve, protect, restore, and enhance coastal zone areas. This unique federal-state partnership leaves day-to-day management decisions at the state level. Seven Great Lakes states (Ohio, Minnesota, Michigan, New York, Wisconsin, Indiana and Pennsylvania) are working to implement their accepted coastal zone management plans and rely on the coastal zone grants. The state of Illinois is in the process of having its coastal zone management plan reviewed and accepted. We believe that increased funds should be available to support the protection of critical habitats and reduction of the impacts of polluted runoff on coastal waters, targeted assistance to local communities to plan for and manage growth, and the enhancement of state efforts to address emerging local, regional, and national problems. The President requested \$66.15 million for these grants in the FY-09 budget proposal, and the grants received \$64.42 million in FY-08.

- **We support funding for the Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory at \$12 million.**

Work at NOAA's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL), a premier research institution focusing on fresh water resources, is critical to the effective management of the Great Lakes. GLERL conducts on-going research on a variety of issues including invasive species, climate change, and hydrologic processes.

Funding for GLERL has remained stagnant for years, and additional funds are needed in order to ensure current research needs are met. The proposed FY-09 budget requests \$9.29 million, and the amount provided for GLERL in FY-08 was \$9.02 million. The very slight increase in funding falls short of covering GLERL's costs for increases in rent and salaries. With additional funding above the Administration's request, GLERL would be able to conduct additional research on precipitation and evaporation in order to provide data that is needed in order to implement a water management standard

as well as research on the impacts of aquatic invasive species.

- We urge the Committee to provide \$3.0 million to initiate the Great Lakes Observing System.

The Ocean Action Plan recommends a national system of observing systems to provide real-time data about water conditions. The Great Lakes Observing System needs \$3.0 million to initiate an intensive monitoring program for observing improvements, and it is part of the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) initiative. The system would develop a modeling and monitoring program, including 3-dimensional modeling approaches to be run 24-hours/day and 365 days/year to simulate existing flow conditions and forecast near-term changes in current patterns. The model would also be used to support long-term research on aquatic habitats, fishery research and sediment/pathogen near shore movement. Additionally, this system would provide wide community access to real-time and historic data on the hydrology, biology, chemistry, geology and cultural resources of the Great Lakes.

We appreciate your consideration of our requests for the Great Lakes region. Should your staff have any questions, they may direct their inquiries to Joy Mulinex at 224-1211.

Sincerely,

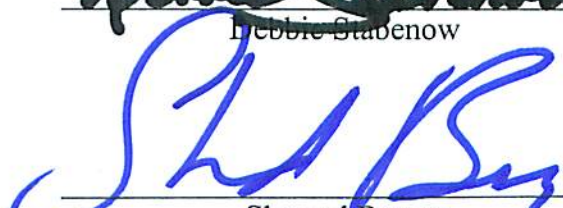

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